

"IoWoman"

An Occasionally Printed Newsletter

from the

Iowa Commission on the Status of Women

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Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women will be held Saturday, May 5, in Medbury Hall at Drake University, the corner of 28th and Carpenter, beginning at 9:30 a.m. Tentative agenda for the meeting will include child care, legal rights of minor, pregnant unwed girls, inheritance tax, and the possibility of the Commission producing a booklet on laws of interest to women.

Sex-bias in Education

At the March 24th meeting, the Commission called upon the State Department of Public Instruction to take affirmative action to provide equal opportunity for women and to eliminate sex-biased practices in the education system. Such action, the motion continued, should include focus on recruitment and the promotion of women in professional and managerial positions in education, ending sexual stereotyping in the elementary and secondary schools through changes in the instructional material, in-service training of educational personnel, and assuring that there will be equal programs available for both boys and girls; and providing equal opportunity for women as students and faculty members in higher education.

In addition Chairperson Cris Wilson was instructed to meet with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to discuss in more detail the implications of the motion and specific methods of implementing these goals.

Appointments

A motion to ask the Iowa Senate "to consider the long range impact" of the male nominees to the Board of Regents and the Parole Board was defeated. However, the Commission is anxious that the information compiled through the Roster be used to encourage more appointments of women to state boards and commissions. Chairperson Cris Wilson has culled from the Roster a number of women who might be eligible for various appointments, has contacted a number of these, and has submitted their names and roster forms to the Governor's Office for his consideration.

Civil Rights
Commission

In response to the Commission's request for lifting of the confidentiality clause used by the Iowa Civil Rights Commission. Mrs. Frances Lowder, Civil Rights Commission member, and Mr. Alvin Hayes, Civil Rights Commission Director, met with the Status of Women Commission. The Civil Rights Commission is concerned about the repercussions of such a move on the complainant. Although the person or institution against whom the complaint is being filed is already immediately notified, Mrs. Lowder felt that the confidentiality clause prevented retaliation by lower echelon management and co-workers. Also in the case of an unsupportable claim, there is protection for the person or institution accused unjustly. It was noted that federal law required confidentiality and that this was a pattern for most other states.

The members of the Commission on the Status of Women emphasized the need to educate the public and the difficulty of learning the facts of the situation in any but the few cases (less than 2%) where public action is taken. They also mentioned the lack of confidentiality in other proceedings where filings of suits were a matter of public record.

Abortion

U. S. District Court Judge William G. Hanson has asked the appointment of a panel of three federal judges to hear the suit challenging constitutionality of Iowa's century-old abortion law. Plaintiffs in the suit are two Des Moines medical physicians and two women. The suit was brought in an effort to clarify the Iowa situation, to make it unmistakably clear to doctors, hospitals, and the public that under the U. S. Supreme Court decision of January 22 the Iowa abortion law no longer is enforceable.

Judge Hanson said the Iowa Civil Liberties Union suit presents "substantial questions as to whether there is potency left" in the Iowa law. These questions presumably pertain to whether the Iowa law, even though invalid for the first six months of pregnancy, can be valid with respect to the last three months of pregnancy.

The ICLU brought its suit because only a few of the 140 Iowa hospitals had changed policies to adjust to the Supreme Court decision as it applied to the first six months of pregnancy. Although Attorney General Richard C. Turner has said in a letter to a state senator that the Iowa law is void in light of the Supreme Court decision, at least up to the sixth month of pregnancy and possibly after that, he has not issued a formal opinion on the legality of abortions in Iowa. Iowa Chief Justice C. Edwin Moore has said a test case is not needed because Iowa courts are "bound by the U. S. Supreme Court ruling." However, many doctors, concerned about possible prosecution or adverse publicity, have been unwilling to perform abortions as long as the Iowa law was unchanged. The legislature apparently has decided to take no action at the 1973 session. The result is that some women, despite the high court's position, remain unable to get legal, medically-safe abortions in the first six months of pregnancy in Iowa.

Reaction to HEW Cutback

The Iowa House and Senate recently approved a resolution that called upon the Department of Health, Education and Welfare to rescind or modify its new proposed rules to the Social Security Act. The proposed changes would have reduced federal support to families, children, the aged, blind, and disabled in Iowa by at least \$5.6 million.

It appears that such strong statements by the Iowa General Assembly, by Governor Robert Ray, and by countless other individuals and organizations (approximately 75,000 across the nation) have persuaded HEW to delay action on their proposed guidelines until alternative guidelines that are positive and constructive can be devised. The guidelines originally proposed by HEW would have terminated or reduced present federal programs that support child care services in Iowa and thus would have forced many women to quit work in order to care for their children or have denied many children quality care while their mothers were at work.

Child care has proven itself to be a positive and effective means of reducing the number of families dependent upon welfare for subsis-

tence. It gives children a healthy and positive beginning in life by caring for the development of their socialization skills, learning skills, and general physical and mental well-being.

The 1970 Iowa census figures showed 56,287 children under age six and 198,768 between the ages of six and 17 years who had mothers working outside the home. As of January 1973, the Family and Children's Bureau of the State Department of Social Services reported that Iowa had only 236 licensed day care centers with a combined capacity for 8,065 children.

Equal Rights Amendment

An effort has begun to get the Iowa legislature to rescind its adoption of the Equal Rights Amendment. Iowa Women Against the Equal Rights Amendment have sent legislators a letter calling the amendment "an unfair and degrading indictment of the women of Iowa."

The Iowa legislature ratified ERA in 1972. At present, 30 states have ratified the amendment; to be adopted at least eight more must join them. One state, Nebraska, has voted to rescind its ratification, but the legality of that position is open to question. In the past, the courts have yielded to Congress on the issue of a state being able to reverse a "yes" vote and may be expected to do so again. Congress, if it follows its own century-long precedent, will recognize only affirmative ratifications, not any reversals. However, either the Supreme Court or Congress could switch from their previous decisions.

If your legislators voted against ERA in 1972 or if you have new legislators write and let them know your feelings about rescinding ratification. Even if your legislator previously voted for ERA this might be a wise thing to do.

Pregnancy and Unemployment

The Advisory Council of the Iowa Employment Security Commission (unemployment insurance) recently recommended that pregnant women not obtain unemployment insurance. Their reasoning was that "Pregnancy is a voluntary condition," and is neither illness nor injury.

Rep. Joan Lipsky, who chairs the Council, fought the recommendation. She pointed out that if a man bought a motorcycle and was injured on it, or if a man's doctor told him to take off work for a few weeks due to a nervous headache, unemployment would be granted if that worker were replaced. However, if a woman were to suspend work for two weeks prior to delivery or, upon her doctor's recommendation stay home for a time to avoid miscarriage, that woman would be denied unemployment benefits.

Child Care Bill

A bill has been introduced in the Senate (SF 434) which would establish administrative procedures and provide funds to assist in establishing and operating community day care centers. The appropriation of \$500,000 for each year of the next biennium would be channeled through the Department of Social Services to the county boards of social welfare. Allocation to counties would primarily be determined by two factors: the number of children under seven years of age residing in the county and the number of low income families in the same area.

In addition the bill provides some assistance for training of personnel to work in the centers. Local child care centers might use part of their funds to assist employees to attend courses related to their

work. The Department of Social Services may also use part of their funds for this purpose. The act also calls for the Department of Social Services to cooperate with and financially assist educational institutions in establishing short courses relevant to personnel working in day care centers.

U.S. Civil Rights:
Women's Unit

A women's rights program unit has been added to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. The Commission is not an enforcement unit, but rather functions as an educational, investigative, and advisory group.

One of the primary tasks of the women's rights unit will be an enforcement-effort report. This would be an assessment of the existing agencies, departments, etc. for enforcing anti-sex discrimination laws. Ms. Carol Kummerfeld, director of the unit, foresees a number of other programs:

- a legal status of women study which would make recommendations on how to conform existing laws to non-sexist criteria
- a booklet on federal laws and policy on sex discrimination which would centralize existing information
- a series of regional conferences on women's rights
- a study of sex discrimination in television and in obtaining credit
- hearings on women's rights (the Commission has subpoena power).

Women in Military

Senator Harold Hughes has introduced a bill to assure women in military service equal rights relating to housing benefits and health care for their dependents. The legislation would allow the husband of a woman in military service the same rights, privileges, and benefits which are now available to the wives of men in the service, for example, medical and dental benefits. Equal pay for housing would also make it easier for married women to live off base with their husbands.

Police Officers
and Height

The Cedar Rapids Women's Caucus is filing a complaint with the local Human Rights Commission against the Cedar Rapids Police Department after learning that the minimum height requirement for all police officers is 5'9". Previously the minimum height for policewomen had been 5'4", but when the job descriptions were changed from policeman policewoman to "police officer" the requirement was placed at the previous minimum for policemen.

The Iowa Civil Rights Commission has previously ruled that such a height requirement is discriminatory to women, Orientals, and some Mexican-Americans. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has also stated that such a rule is discriminatory under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In protesting the requirement the Caucus stated that 5'9" minimum for women (whose average height in the U.S. is 5'5") is comparable to a 6'4" minimum for men.

Girls Basketball

Four hundred seventy-five of the 508 high schools in Iowa have committed themselves to offering girls basketball. Although the sport started in Iowa in 1920 there has been a big surge in participation, especially among larger schools, in recent years.

This year 382 schools competed for the state title, an increase of 52 over 2 years ago. In addition 93 other schools have a girls basketball program in the developmental stage or have committed themselves to beginning a program next fall.

E. Wayne Cooley, executive secretary of the Iowa Girls Athletic Union sees little connection between the burgeoning numbers of girls basketball participants and the women's liberation movement. Some local authorities, however, say that increased awareness of the rights of women have been instrumental because they have felt more strongly the need to provide more opportunities for girls to participate in athletics to make their program more commensurate with that of boys.

Woman Guard Not "Cruel Punishment"

U.S. District Judge William C. Hanson has ruled that having a female guard does not constitute "cruel and unusual punishment" for prisoners in the State Penitentiary at Fort Madison, an all male maximum security prison.

Creativity in Women

"Women: Personality and Society", an honors seminar at the University of Northern Iowa is being taught by Dr. Marie Kloss, a clinical psychologist and assistant professor of psychology. Dr. Kloss wrote her doctoral dissertation on factors contributing to creativity in adolescents and deals with creativity in women at some length in this seminar.

Tests to evaluate creativity, she says, repeatedly show women to be as creative as men, but fewer women fulfill their creative capacities in our society. The reasons, she feels, are manifold, but stem primarily from "the male oppression of women". In one study she conducted in California male teachers tend to select male students as "creative" twice as often as female students. And from childhood girls are reinforced for simply "being" (i.e. "being pretty") while boys receive more reinforcement for "doing". Women tend to be more inhibited in our society and to underestimate their intellectual abilities. Creativity, however, thrives on self-confidence and uninhibited exploration and thus women are further thwarted from fulfilling their creative abilities.

As a result, women tend to underate themselves and other women. A study where readers were given identical manuscripts, one signed by a male and the other signed by a female, showed that the woman's was consistently rated more negatively; and this was true for female readers as well as male readers.

Commercials

Two 30-second commercials produced by women for a male audience are being shown on some television stations in the New York City area at no cost to the sponsor. The sponsor, National Organization for Women, hopes that additional stations will run the commercials.

Both commercials are low-key. One shows a baby girl, with an off-screen voice saying: "This healthy normal baby had a handicap: She was born female. When she grows up, her job opportunities will be limited and her pay low." The voice then adds that job discrimination based on sex is both illegal and a waste of human resources.

The other commercial illustrates the waste by showing a young woman with a college degree and academic honors being interviewed by a man in the personnel department. "You know, of course, that we start all our girls in the typing pool," he tells her.

The commercials, filmed last October at CBS's station in Philadelphia, were put together by NOW members with the CBS Television network footing the production costs.

Affirmative Response to Abortion

Dr. John Knowles, former director of Massachusetts General Hospital and currently President of the Rockefeller Foundation, has called for an affirmative response to the Supreme Court decision on abortion. "The public policy objective that abortions are performed as early as possible requires that abortion be available at low cost with minimum red tape and administrative delay," he stated. The following factors he felt, would constitute affirmative action:

- health insurance and Medicaid to cover the cost of abortion
- free or low-cost pregnancy detection services
- development of medical standards for abortion
- non-profit outpatient clinics to perform the bulk of early abortions
- family planning counseling and services widely available to reduce need for abortion.

First Convention Since 1872

The National Women's Political Caucus which met in Houston in February was the first women's political convention since 1872. Of prime interest to the convention was the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. Among the other high priority items passed on to the steering committee for action were the following:

- high quality child care available free to low income families and on a sliding scale to other families
- increase in minimum wage to \$2.50 per hour and extension of coverage to domestic and agricultural workers
- women's rights bill prohibiting discrimination in all federally assisted programs, public accommodations, and housing
- extend Title IX of Higher Education Act of 1972 to prohibit discrimination in admission to colleges and universities
- legislation to provide technical assistance to end sexism at every level of education
- coverage in health security programs of all women's health services
- expansion of family planning
- reduce to five years the length of time a marriage must last in order for a woman to qualify for wife or widow's benefits under social security.

Teenage Attitudes

A poll by Seventeen magazine indicates that while the term "women's lib" engenders a negative attitude in many teenagers, the issues related to women's rights are finding strong support among today's younger women. Fifty-five per cent of the respondents believed that a woman will be elected President during their lifetime and 83 per cent indicated that they would vote for a woman if she were qualified. At the same time 86 per cent felt that men have better opportunities in politics than women. Strong support was also indicated for child care centers and for a more equal distribution of household chores between husband and wife.

7.4% Wives Earn Most

In 7.4% (3.2 million) of all husband-wife families the wife earns more than the husband according to figures released by the Census Bureau based on the 1970 Census. Seventy-seven per cent of these women were employed, more than half on a year-round basis. In these families 61% of the husbands were working and 43% of the couples had children. In other figures the Bureau reported that while the median income for all families was \$7833, the average income for families with a male head was \$2999.